

ON EITHER SIDE

by Van Therald

The world stands out on either side

No wider than the heart is wide;

Above the world is stretched the sky;—

No higher than the soul is high.

TINTYPE-TO ALL THE WORLD

In 1838 Joseph Smith began his ponderous history of events surrounding the bringing forth of the Book of Mormon, "to put all inquirers after truth in possession of the facts, as they have transpired;" (Joseph Smith 2:2). Others have done much the same work for the Chinese translation of that Book. There are some facts heretofore unpublished:

TRANSLATION AND PRINTING - HU'S HEADACHE

Hu Wei I, the Book's translator, has at his Taipei home a treasure-chest trunk in which he keeps his original translation (his own handwriting in green ink), the now beaten English Book of Mormon he used, the printer's first galley-proof, and a handwritten copy of the translation. (Four young sisters acting as scribes subsequently made three copies of his original; Hong Kong has one copy, and Taipei one). All these the present writer thumbed himself.

He translated the Book at home, writing by himself—he moved three times during the process—or sometimes he worked in a rented house in Taipei's suburbia.



The rented building where some of the work was done.

This is his work schedule:

7 August 62 – Mission President Taylor called him to translate III Nephi, which he did in two months. The purpose was to "publish the Fifth Gospel." This was never done.

5 November 63 – Apostle Hinckley set him apart to translate the whole book.

1 January 64 – Began translation on leave without pay from CAT Airlines. (He works in the Director of Communications Division's Office, which controls the system-wide radio stations, message centers, and switchboards.)

19 July 64 – Completed translation, having revised III Nephi, using the previous translation for reference only. (He lamented with a rueful wink, "It took me seven months; Joseph Smith only needed two.")

—[April 7 – July 1, 1829; the printing of the English copy began on August 1829 and finished on March 26, 1830 when it was announced for sale in the local papers.] He pushed hard to get it done, that "the elders, priests and teachers of this Church shall teach the principles of my Gospel, which are in the...Book of Mormon, in the which is the fullness of the Gospel;" (D&C 42:12). On this date he began proofreading the copy with the four sisters making the additional copies. They began each session with prayer.

24 October 64 – Sisters finished the copy work. Work stopped here to wait for budget approval for printing from Salt Lake.

June 65 – Budget approved.

8 July 65 to 5 November 65 – The first galleys having been sent to and corrected by the translator, all was

ready for publication.

December 65-Publication.

1 February 66-Elder Hu alone began proofreading the Book until—

30 March 66-Proofreading finished.
June 66 - Interview in English for this writing.

The corrections found in proofreading are few, and are typographical. "I have also refined the wordings in some instances." There were no doctrinal errors. He did not go to Hong Kong to read the final Book-drafts, and so he did not know what errors remained what it was at last published.

The Isaiah sections of the Nephi books presented unique problems. He used the Chinese Bible for reference only, and translated the Book of Mormon copy in his own way. (Where as the English Book of Mormon's Isaiah agrees with the Bible approximately 90%.)

"I don't like the Chinese Bible translation at all. In frequent areas, the doctrine and meanings are translated wrong. Often a word does not retain its original or actual meaning. I have tried not to allow such ambiguities in the Book of Mormon translation. The Bible is neither the Mandarin nor classic style. It is just a peculiar and nebulous one. I have used the Mandarin style."

He found many words troublesome to translate, but none that study could not absolve. It took him one complete translation just to get down how to work recurring names and idioms in every context. Then he could go back and make it uniform. The translation is not high-flown or low-strung. Everyone can read it.

Transliterating proper nouns was another problem. If a name occurs frequently in the Bible and is well-know, he did not change it. If it is new or infrequent he made his own transliteration according to the Pronouncing Vocabulary in the English Book of Mormon. (He would like to have changed



President Hu and scribe at proofreading.



Scribes making copies.

"Ni Fei" to "Ni Huai" as the English, but everyone has been accustomed to using the former for so long, he left it.)

Any Chinese character of similar pronunciation is available for transliteration. Sometimes a meaning was so exotic he would create a new word to fit the need. (Joseph Smith used a combination of the English "more" and the Reformed Egyptian "mon"—good—to create "Mormon," the English equivalent of the characters on the Gold plates—a very good man!)

The most troublesome English idioms were "and it come to pass," and "Behold!" The former he fortunately omitted entirely. He included about 50% of the latter where they are essential to the meaning.

The Book was printed from rotogravure-type metal plates. The printers will correct the mistakes on the plates and will use them again for subsequent editions. In perhaps two instances they must engrave a page again because of major omissions or errors in the original.

Elder Hu is hopeful that soon-future editions will include color lithographs of the events, as well as footnotes, the index, synopsis of chapters, and other helps. He will not translate these, however. "These are easy, and can be done by anyone." The authorization for these things will come from Hong Kong.

"A translator must be careful not to translate doctrine according to his own opinion, but as what is literally intended in the original. If it is otherwise it is dishonest. It is tragic that our Chinese Bible is this way in parts." From all parts of the Island, the U.S., and other foreign countries has come testimony of the purity of Elder HU's translation—that God "gave him power from on high, by the means which were before prepared, to translate the Book of Mormon; which contains a record of a fallen people.

and the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Gentiles and to the Jews also;proving to the world that the holy scriptures are true, and that God does inspire men and call them to his holy work in this age and generation, as well as in generations of old...;" (D&C 20:8-9,11).

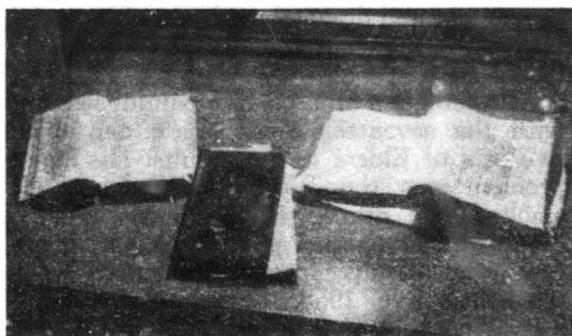
Publication Results and Significance —The Creative Synthesis

President Hu's favorite parts of the Book of Mormon are many: "Alma on the Resurrection and Fall of Man, the 'Book of Mormon', Moroni for Church ceremonies, and Jacob 5." He anticipates little or no anti-Book of Mormon literature. If there ever is, "it is always very weak. There are no grounds for it. I think the people who write it know themselves the Book is true."

The Book requires two major things from the serious investigator. 1) A person must know the doctrine he is studying. "He can't be a Mormon just because his ancestors are." He must know why. 2) He must accept the doctrine of complete Free Agency. He has to think independently; he can't run to his priest or monk for everything he does. "As he reads, he is responsible only to his conscience and God." That is a challenge.

"We Chinese are a little different from Westerners. The Westerners are from stock that have had the Gospel and many have hardened their hearts against it. We have not. [Perhaps this is the difference between ignorance and innocence!] There are many parts of the Book that apply to us directly. Alma 32 is perhaps the best."

The Book of Mormon teachings fit Chinese philosophy because "there are so many good moral analects and standards." Like the Book of Mormon prophets, Confucius and Mencius stressed love, kindness, empathy. The Book of Mormon fits better than the Bible because it is clearer. "It shows that God is just and no respecter of



L to R—A first edition copy; used for correction; the English BM he used to translate, the printer's galleys from which the 1st edition was printed.

nations or persons. The people can accept it."

Lao Tzu is very like the Book of Mormon. He said, "The proud shall fail." The Book of Mormon will do much to overcome the "false traditions" that prevent a person from receiving the Gospel.

Alma wrote, "For behold the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word, yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have; therefore we see that the Lord doth counsel in wisdom, according to that which is just and true." (Alma 29:8). Speaking of the future, Elder Hu is anxious to see the Chinese Doctrine and Covenants. He feels that its doctrine is deeper than the Book of Mormon. "It is the next logical step," when the Lord "seeth fit."

THE MAN

At President Hu's home the writer tape-recorded some English shorthand lessons. The translator is learning it so he can advance at CAT. He taught himself English.

At fifty-three, Hu Wei I can call his life full, to say the least. He is the father of three girls—age 16, 10, and 9. "My wife and family are happy and support me in everything I do, especially about Church work." He graduated from primary school at fourteen. He attended some night school classes, but never went to high school or college. He was a colonel at a mainland military academy, took training in Morse code, and worked for the Chinese National Aviation Corporation (CNAC) before he came to Taiwan seventeen years ago—shortly before the Communists entered Shanghai. "I am grateful to have come here, because if I did not, I would not have the Gospel."

The missionaries tracted him out. "I saw them coming when I was strolling outside, two blocks from my house, with my second daughter in my arms. I tried to go farther to avoid them. My eldest daughter



Trunk with galleys, old BM, and President Hu's handwritten copy, and one copy made by scribes.

ran to me and dragged me back with gleeful cries of 'Americans, Americans!' I had to listen."

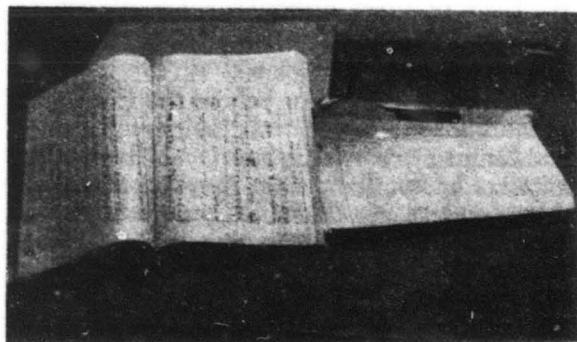
It took ten months, two painful sessions with the seventeen-lesson series, and about five sets of Elders to get results. His major problem was the Word of Wisdom. He smoked. He drank. He gambled. Finally, "I quit all at once. I gave my cigar, cigarettes, and all my pipes to my butler." On Christmas Eve, 1958, they baptized him.

"The best of those early members went to the States. I am too old to go. My family is here. I would not be happy in a foreign country." Surely, here he is a happy man.

Ater President Hu had seen and corrected



President Hu at work.



Open copy—President Hu's writing of P. 226 of Mosiah draft. Closed—Jacob, Enos, Jacom Onini, W. of Mormon.

draft for this article, he wrote the following to the writer (with a strong exhortation to omit "flattery"): "The translation was done through much prayer and fasting by the leaders, missionaries, and members of the Church in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and states, also through the Holy Ghost and power from on high, yet errors are unavoidable because of my weakness. I shall be appreciative to receive any comments from readers for [the third edition] revision's reference."

The best way to characterize Hu Wei I is this (and the writer thinks the "flattery" inadequate): "His life was gentle, and all the elements so mixed in him that Nature might stand up and say to all the world, 'This was a man;' (Shakespeare, Julius Caesar V:V).

With Compliments

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